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SCULPTURES FROM THREE NORTH CAROLINA ARTISTS SELECTED FOR CITY PLAZA PEDESTALS

As part of the new City Plaza in Downtown Raleigh, three North Carolina artists have been selected to exhibit outdoor sculptures for a period of one year, starting this month and continuing to October 2010. The artworks will be installed on three centerpiece pedestals in the City Plaza in the 500 block of Fayetteville Street. The project is called *Art on City Plaza*.

City festivities celebrating the City Plaza opening will take place Oct. 24 as part of the Raleigh Wide Open 4 celebration. A special reception recognizing the new plaza sculptures and three other Fayetteville Street public art projects will take place at the City of Raleigh's Urban Design Center on Friday, Oct. 23 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Urban Design Center is located at 133 Fayetteville St. at the Hargett Street intersection.

The sculpture artists selected are William Donnan of Franklinville, Hanna Jubran of Grimesland, and Adam Walls of Red Springs. Artist applications were received from across the state and reviewed by a panel comprised of representatives from Artspace, Visual Art Exchange, and the City of Raleigh Arts Commission.

"Visual Art Exchange is excited to help showcase North Carolina artists in the new center of downtown," said Sarah Powers, executive director of Visual Art Exchange (VAE).

VAE, in partnership with Artspace and the City's Arts Commission, is sponsoring the outdoor sculptures. "It is wonderful that the city is providing this opportunity for public art on the plaza," Ms. Powers added.

The three works of art selected vary in style, materials, and size. Mr. Donnan's sculpture, "Bow," is a reinforced cement sculpture, 10 feet, 6 inches high and weighing 1,000 pounds. "In the case of 'Bow' I was trying to take a simple human gesture and

interpret it as a study in balance and grace,” Mr. Donnan said. “By using massive rock forms held up by a delicate bone form I am ... giving the viewer the feeling that the sculpture is only temporarily at rest.”

From 1978 to 1983, Mr. Donnan worked on the design staff of the North Carolina Zoological Park in Asheboro, where he learned to use reinforced cement as a sculptural medium for creating natural habitats. Subsequently, he has shaped the medium into indoor and outdoor sculptures that have been widely exhibited and collected across the country. Notable commissions include the “Tree of Knowledge” in 1998 at the Greensboro Central Public Library.

Hanna Jubran’s sculpture “Opposing Forces” is painted steel that is 14 feet high and weighs 1,300 pounds. “This sculpture is from a series of works that deals with the concept of the four elements --- earth, water, fire and wind,” he explained. “It expresses the cycle of life, growth and continuum through the interplay of shape, form, space, and colors.”

Mr. Jubran has exhibited his work and is in collections around the world, including Argentina, Mexico, Latvia, Finland, and Germany, Japan, and Israel. Notable commissions include the “Monument to 100 Years of Aviation” in 2003 at Kitty Hawk. Mr. Jubran received his master’s degree in fine arts from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. He teaches art at East Carolina University.

Adam Walls’ piece, “Toy Defense,” is 7-foot-high high sculpture of painted steel and tires. It weights 1,700 pounds. “I am incredibly inspired by pop culture items such as toys, comics, and science fiction,” he said. “My sculpture entitled ‘Toy Defense’ is obviously derived from these influences. ‘Toy Defense’ allows a space for the viewer-participant to engage with it by becoming part of the piece in much the same way that I wanted to play with my action figures as a child.”

Mr. Walls has exhibited his work throughout the South. In addition to this series of colorful and playful sculptures, which he calls “Toys,” he also fabricates large geometric steel sculptures and works in wood and ceramics. Mr. Walls received his master’s degree in fine arts from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C. He is currently head of the sculpture program at the University of North Carolina-Pembroke.

Established in 1977 as the official advisory body and advocate for the arts to the Raleigh City Council, the City of Raleigh Arts Commission holds the distinction of being the first municipal arts commission created in North Carolina. Serving as the leading force to champion the arts with Raleigh citizens and their representatives, the Arts Commission’s myriad activities foster, support, and promote the arts in the Capital City.

For more information about the *Art on City Plaza* project, contact the Arts Commission’s public art coordinator, Jerry Bolas, at 831-2414 or Gerald.bolas@ci.raleigh.nc.us; or visit www.raleighnc.gov/arts.